

# Kurdish revolt resumes in Iran leaving '86 dead'



Moslem clergy and Afghan refugees who marched to the Afghan Embassy in Tehran yesterday, to protest against the alleged massacre of dissidents by the Kabul Government.

From Martin Woollacott in Tehran

Heavy fighting continued in the Kurdish provincial capital of Sanandaj yesterday, after a shaky ceasefire, imposed on Monday, broke down.

Kurdish representatives telephoned Tehran from the town held up the receiver so that reporters could hear the machine-gun fire from helicopter gunships.

Reports said that the town's hospitals were full of wounded, and a group of Kurds who staged a protest at the Prime Minister's office in Tehran, claimed that 86 people had died. The trouble in the town began on Sunday, when Kurds asked the Army garrison to give them ammunition and weapons.

They were apparently protesting that weapons and ammunition had been given to selective townsfolk and to followers of Ahmad Mozafzadeh, a Kurdish leader backed by the Government. The situation worsened after the refusal, and the Kurds took over the radio station, police station, and gendarmerie headquarters, and besieged the garrison.

Despite appeals from Ayatollah Khomeini and from Kurdish religious and political leaders, the fighting has continued since Sunday afternoon. The ceasefire arranged on Monday evening apparently held for only a few hours.

All approach roads to the town have been sealed off and Government statements have spoken of "revolutionary militia" being dispatched to the town, but late yesterday there were no indications that they had arrived.

The disaster in Sanandaj appears to be the result of Government efforts to dodge the Kurds' demands for autonomy by building up their preferred moderate leader, Mozafzadeh. The Kurds, however, prefer their spokesman, Sheikh Ezzadin Hussein, who was picked shortly after the Revolution by a conference of Kurdish clerics, politicians, and tribal leaders.

The Kurdish group which protested at the Prime Minister's office in Tehran yesterday also asserted that the Government had picked unrepresentative Kurds and local Persians in setting up revolutionary committees in Kurdistan and asked that a Government delegation be sent to rectify the situation.

Meanwhile, the increasing number of protests about the form of the national referendum to be held here at the end of the month, suggests that many people could boycott or fail to vote. The people will be asked whether they prefer a Monarchy or an Islamic Republic.

The recently-formed National Democratic Front yesterday claimed the referendum was meaningless. The older

National Front, which grouped liberal Opposition under the Shah, is advising its supporters to vote for an Islamic Republic, but its members privately suggest that the word "Islamic" will only be nominal.

The Left-wing groups have mainly supported the referendum. But their motive is suspect. The old Communist Party, the Tudeh, has said it will vote for an Islamic Republic, but, conscious that it is only barely tolerated, is desperate not to put a foot wrong. The Moslem Left, the Mujahideen, have also supported the referendum, but they have made it clear that their conception of an Islamic Republic is different from that of other groups.

Liberals fear that the referendum will be used by Moslem fundamentalists as a mandate to impose a system that few people really want.

Meanwhile, Iran is preparing for Nowruz, the ancient spring festival that some extreme Moslems at first suggested should be banned because it is not on the Islamic religious calendar. Nearly all offices and shops will be closed for five days—shorter than the normal 13 days—while Iranians observe the old custom.

Foreigners have been ordered to leave by the Ministry of Labour. There are still several hundred thousand foreign workers in the country, including Pakistanis, Indians,

Afghans, Filipinos, and South Koreans, and a few thousand remaining Europeans and Americans. Work permits for these foreigners are to be terminated during the next eight weeks, except where they are vital to the country.

Reuter adds: A leading Iranian political commentator said yesterday that human rights violations in Iran since last month's revolution could only be compared to the atrocities in Cambodia under the Pol Pot regime.

Mr Fariborz Atapour, whose 78-year-old father was arrested by revolutionary militiamen last week, wrote in the English-language Tehran Journal, that there were more than 20,000 political prisoners in Iran.

"The conditions under which our political prisoners are being held in Iran today are worse than they were before the revolution," Mr Atapour said. He added that Qasr prison, Tehran held 7,000 who were deprived of sleeping facilities, sufficient food, medical care, or proper sanitation.

However, an Iranian lawyer and human rights activist, Mr Abdol-Karim Lahiji, visited Qasr gaol last week and interviewed the former premier Mr Amir Abbas Hoveyda, and other imprisoned officials of the toppled monarchy.

He said there were about 800 political prisoners there, and he was fairly satisfied about prison conditions, including food, hygiene and medical care.

